

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claim 14; AMEND claims 1-3, 5-7 and 9-12; and reconsider the claims in accordance with the following:

1. (currently amended) A computer readable medium storing a test support program executed by a computer for performing an operational test of a program under development by using test patterns each of which includes a parameter to be inputted to a function defined in the program under development and a return value to be outputted from the function, said test support program makes said computer perform processing comprising ~~the steps of~~:

(a) acquiring a post-update operation description which defines details of an operation of a function included in said program under development after an update when said program under development undergoes the update;

(b) selecting a pre-update operation description which has high commonality with said post-update operation description acquired in ~~step~~-(a), from among a plurality of pre-update operation descriptions defining details of operations of functions included in said program under development before the update;

(c) extracting a pre-update test pattern for an operational test of said pre-update operation description selected in ~~step~~-(b), from among a plurality of pre-update test patterns prepared for operational tests of the program under development before the update; and

(d) generating a post-update test pattern for an operational test of said post-update operation description acquired in ~~step~~-(a), by inheriting at least a portion of said pre-update test pattern extracted in ~~step~~-(c).

2. (currently amended) The ~~test support program~~ computer readable medium according to claim 1, wherein one of said plurality of pre-update operation descriptions which is identical to said post-update operation description acquired in ~~step~~-(a) in at least one of a plurality of predesignated attribute information items is selected in ~~step~~-(b) as said pre-update operation description.

3. (currently amended) The ~~test support program~~ computer readable medium according to claim 2, wherein priorities are assigned to said plurality of predesignated attribute information items, and one of said plurality of pre-update operation descriptions which is identical to said post-update operation description acquired in ~~step~~-(a) in a portion of the plurality of predesignated attribute information items having high priority is preferentially selected in ~~step~~-(b) as said pre-update operation description.

4. (currently amended) The ~~test support program~~ computer readable medium according to claim 2, wherein said plurality of predesignated attribute information items include a function name specifying a function, a type of a parameter to be inputted to the function, a type of a return value to be outputted from the function after the function is executed.

5. (currently amended) The ~~test support program~~ computer readable medium according to claim 1, wherein information to be inherited in ~~step~~-(d) from said pre-update test pattern extracted in ~~step~~-(c) is determined according to at least one attribute information item which is common to said post-update operation description acquired in ~~step~~-(a) and said pre-update operation description selected in ~~step~~-(b).

6. (currently amended) The ~~test support program~~ computer readable medium according to claim 5, wherein said plurality of predesignated attribute information items include a function name specifying a function, a type of a parameter to be inputted to the function, a type of a return value to be outputted from the function after the function is executed, and data corresponding to the at least one attribute information item common to said post-update operation description acquired in ~~step~~-(a) and said pre-update operation description selected in ~~step~~-(b), other than the function name, is inherited from said pre-update test pattern extracted in ~~step~~-(c).

7. (currently amended) The ~~test support program~~ computer readable medium according to claim 1, wherein said processing further comprises ~~a step of~~ automatically generating information as at least a portion of said post-update test pattern which does not inherit from said pre-update test pattern extracted in ~~step~~-(c).

8. (currently amended) The ~~test support program~~ computer readable medium according to claim 7, wherein said processing further comprises ~~a step of~~ displaying details of said post-update test pattern, and highlighting said information which is automatically generated.

9. (currently amended) The ~~test support program~~ computer readable medium according to claim 1, wherein said processing further comprises ~~a step of~~ selecting one of said plurality of pre-update operation descriptions based on designation by a manipulation input, when none of the plurality of pre-update operation descriptions has high commonality with said post-update operation description acquired in ~~step~~-(a).

10. (currently amended) The ~~test support program~~ computer readable medium according to claim 9, wherein said processing further comprises ~~a step of~~ displaying a list of at least one of said plurality of pre-update operation descriptions which has not been selected, and ~~a step of~~ selecting one of the at least one of said plurality of pre-update operation descriptions which is designated by a manipulation input.

11. (currently amended) A computer readable medium storing a test support program executed by a computer for performing an operational test of an object-oriented program under development by using test patterns each of which includes a parameter to be inputted to a function defined in the object-oriented program and a return value to be outputted from the function, said test support program makes said computer perform processing comprising the ~~steps of~~:

(a) acquiring a post-update method information item which defines details of an operation of a function included in said object-oriented program after an update, when said object-oriented program undergoes the update;

(b) selecting a pre-update method information item which has high commonality with said post-update method information item acquired in ~~step~~-(a), from among a plurality of pre-update method information items defining details of operations of functions included in said object-oriented program before the update;

(c) extracting a pre-update test pattern for an operational test of said pre-update method information item selected in ~~step~~-(b), from among a plurality of pre-update test patterns prepared for operational tests of the object-oriented program before the update; and

(d) generating a post-update test pattern for an operational test of said post-update method information item acquired in ~~step~~-(a), by inheriting at least a portion of said pre-update test pattern extracted in ~~step~~-(c).

12. (currently amended) A computer readable medium storing a test support process for performing an operational test of a program under development by using test patterns each of which includes a parameter to be inputted to a function defined in the program and a return value to be outputted from the function, said test support process comprising ~~the steps of~~:

(a) acquiring a post-update operation description which defines details of an operation of a function included in said program after an update, when said program undergoes the update;

(b) selecting a pre-update operation description which has high commonality with said post-update operation description acquired in ~~step~~-(a), from among a plurality of pre-update operation descriptions defining details of operations of functions included in said program before the update;

(c) extracting a pre-update test pattern for an operational test of said pre-update operation description selected in ~~step~~-(b), from among a plurality of pre-update test patterns prepared for operational tests of the program before the update; and

(d) generating a post-update test pattern for an operational test of said post-update operation description acquired in ~~step~~-(a), by inheriting at least a portion of said pre-update test pattern extracted in ~~step~~-(c).

13. (original) A test support apparatus for performing an operational test of a program under development by using test patterns each of which includes a parameter to be inputted to a function defined in the program and a return value to be outputted from the function, said test support apparatus comprising:

a post-update operation-description acquisition unit which acquires a post-update operation description which defines details of an operation of a function included in said program after an update, when said program undergoes the update;

a pre-update operation-description storage unit which stores a plurality of pre-update operation descriptions defining details of operations of functions included in said program before the update;

a pre-update operation-description selection unit which selects a pre-update operation description which has high commonality with said post-update operation description acquired by

said post-update operation-description acquisition unit, from among said plurality of pre-update operation descriptions stored in said pre-update operation-description storage unit;

a pre-update test-pattern storage unit which stores a plurality of pre-update test patterns prepared for operational tests of the program before the update;

a pre-update test-pattern extraction unit which extracts a pre-update test pattern for an operational test of said pre-update operation description selected by said pre-update operation-description selection unit, from among said plurality of pre-update test patterns stored in said pre-update test-pattern storage unit; and

a post-update test-pattern generation unit which generates a post-update test pattern for an operational test of said post-update operation description acquired by said post-update operation-description acquisition unit, by inheriting at least a portion of said pre-update test pattern extracted by said pre-update test-pattern extraction unit.

Claim 14 (canceled).